

UPSTAIRS BULLETIN

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Chicago, Illinois An Educational Group

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

Before our St. Alphonsus programs they were given at the Eighth Street Theatre, Mandel Hall, the Goodman Theatre and the Civic. They became too expensive or impractical and in searching for a different theatre we by chance found the lovely old Opera House - The Athenaeum. Our first programs in this theatre were January 31st and April 30th in 1954 - just twenty years ago. On those two programs we gave "Hansel and Gretel", "The Little Match Girl" and Divertissements. In the cast of those two programs were DOLORES LIPINSKI, PATRICK CUMMINGS, KAREN ROSE, JOHN BARKER, BARBARA STEELE, DARRELL NOTARA, MARLA RAE GOLDEN, NANNETTE SEWARD, ELLEVA DAVIDSON, WILLIAM MALONEY, SHEILA FEILLY, DONNIE JO MEYERS, YVONNE BROWN and MARI LYNN BROWN... all people who have gone on in the theatre in one field or another.

Since that time many others have been presented year after year in these annual and semi-annual programs. Over 40 ballets and hundreds of Divertissements have been presented on that stage. The concerts change each year due to the constant change in 'useable' dancers available in class. The years between 1957 and 1961 were golden years when we had 12 to 14 excellent boys use. Ballets done in those years cannot be repeated because of this lack. The years following, with many more useable girls and fewer boys changed the repertoire considerably. However, there were excellent boys but less in number. At that time we had STEVE PRIMIS, JOHN NEUMEIER, TRUMAN FINNEY, CHARLES SCHICK, JAMES MORSKI, JERRY WISNIEWSKI, DEAN and BILL BADOLATO and MARK TRUDEAU. The girls at that time included KAREN KRYCH, FRUMETH HIRSCH, ALEXIS HOFF, ELISABETH WINEBERG, NAOMI SORKIN, LAUREN ROUSE, JORENE HOLAS and KAREN TIMS.

At various times we used alumni on our programs which paid off on publicity. On May 17, 1963 Mr. STONE'S ballet "L'Inconnue" with RUTH ANN KOESUN and JOHN KRIZA created a local sensation. Even the Critics turned out and Claudia Cassidy's revue was instrumental in the ballet being taken by the American Ballet Theatre. Our production was infinitely superior to theirs which was over-dressed and cluttered with excessive scenery. Also on that program DOLORES LIPINSKI and LARRY LONG danced the "Flower Festival in Genzano" pas de deux. Since that time the programs have concentrated more on the available dancers in the school and the results have not suffered...other than that the critics do not come. In fact, the past three of our four years has reached a peak with larger audiences and greater enthusiasm. So this year we tried three nights instead of the usual two.

This year showed tremendous strides in a large group of young artists - a local teacher was overheard saying - "They really do know how to pick the talent and know what to do with them." It is good to hear favorable comments from the audience on the newer ones chosen. New this year with many good comments were CHRISTOPHER ADAMS, RANDY MELE, MARY RANDOLPH and SUSAN APPLEBY. Each were used with careful use of their basic talents. In the past we always had exceptionally talented girls - usually in threes. This year that number has tripled with the outstanding ones - VANESSA MERIA, ANNETTE KUBAJAK, DIANE REILY, TRACEY HUNTLEY, DARLENE CALLAGHAN, KIM HADLEY, JUDITH BARDIS and MARTHA BIRCHETT. Runners-up in the younger set were CHARLENE CAMPBELL, MORAG MAC KENZIE, DEBORAH RIDLEY and WENDY LEO. As good as they all were it would be difficult to imagine the "Sun" and "Lilacs" without the stronger projected performances of JULIE

WALDER and JUDY SVALANDER, much more seasoned artists. They both give the younger ones something to reach out for. MORAG in "Lilacs" holds the stage like a veteran (as she has always been since we first used her as "the nice girl across the street" in "The Proper Playmate" in 1969.) SCOTT SCHLEXER, JEREMY POLLACK and LYNN ZIOLKA from last year's Cumberland Gap Suite made outstanding progress in their various assignments. It is doubtful if "The Singing Yankee" will ever have another performance, mainly because it had the best all around cast this year and we will be losing our two Gibson Beauties - LORRAINE DENHAM and KRISTYN KOCZUR, both are off for summer stock companies. CHRISTOPHER ADAMS and LYNN ZIOLKA were ideal in their parts. The "Horticultural Wife" had been inserted especially for Christopher's fine voice. In the past it had been sung by HENRY SWISKO and later with BILL REILLY. We were pleased with the three good sized audiences - Sunday was a sell out. Now this program sinks into the memories of those who saw it and it will be of interest to know which of this group make the grade in the profession. You will have a chance to see many of them again another year. Very soon VANESSA MERIA, MARTHA BIRCHETT, CHARLES PIZARRO, CHRISTINE CLARK, LORRAINE DENHAM and KRISTYN KOCZUR will be leaving for other fields. Kristyn will spend the summer at The Barn in Augusta, Michigan and Lorraine at the Little Theatre on the Square in Sullivan, Illinois. There were many of the older Alumni in the audiences this year...JOHN SHARPE, PAT and LINDA HEIM, SHEILA and BILL REILLY, RUTH ANN KOESUN and JOHN KRIZA. BILL GATEWOOD home for medical treatment is now Pearl Langs company manager. Pearl was once a Chicagoan who danced in the Federal Theatre Ballet. SPIRO PASTOS - now a Los Angeles school teacher was home for the Easter Holidays. PHOEBE REDMAN was in from Washington D.C. where she is now with the Black Repertory Group. Phoebe is slim and svelt and appears to be extremely happy there. JAMEE HUGHES is teaching distair reading a half day and ballet the other half at the Jordan Valley School - ten miles south of Salt Lake City, Utah. NAOMI SORKIN will

be a principle dancer in the new Eliot Feld Company with their first performances in June. BILL BADOLATO choreographed the ballet in the opera "Vespri Sicilian" at the Metropolitan and has been asked to do another opera next season. ANN WICK returned to Phoenix to her family doctor about a foot problem - diagnosed as tendonitis in both feet. NANCY GLYNN is to be back in class soon after an extended illness which ended with the removal of her spleen. She was to have been prominent on the concerts but unfortunately ended up only on the cover of the program. GILDO DI NUNZIO stopped in for a jolly lunch with us - he too had surgery for removal of gall bladder. Our close friends CHARLES BOCKMAN and EDNA MC RAE have suffered heart attacks and are now in the hospital. At the same moment JANE BOCKMAN underwent rather serious surgery... this has been a year for illness. We wish them all a speedy recovery. On the brighter side - "One of the qualifications for applicants to the summer program for the Dance Theatre of Harlem is - 'that they should be either male or female'." What else. Another bit of college wisdom - "the audition in the dance studio of the Kannert Center for the Performing arts, will consist of warm-up exercises and simple locomotor patterns across the floor, similar to a class situation." How ridiculous can we get?

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Probably at the worst time in history the school has made an appeal to numerous Foundations for funds to carry on an enlarged project 1975 and 1976. It is hoped to bring famous teachers in for periods of from 2 to 6 weeks duration through out the two years, aimed at the near-professional student and the teaching profession in the entire mid-west. The idea is a good sound one and a much needed one, but would be highly costly bringing in teachers from distant points of the world. As everyone knows money is tight at this time and it is not encouraging. The Foundations have always tossed away money for performances and other odd ideas - but to give money for any kind of specialized training seems to be against all principles. Why?

The school in the past has been one of few of its kind and size that has been able to exist upon its own intake without outside help. Next to nothing has ever been given to the school in the way of money for scholarships. Recently the Mid-America Ballet group gave a gift of \$1,250 for scholarships to four schools in the area. That amount sounds big but when one thinks of helping a single student over a period of 3 or 4 years - it is pin money.

It would seem that after all the years we have taught there would be one alumni around who could work into a good assistant; and eventually take over. The more successful of our alumni would never dream of working for our salaries. Furthermore most of them have not kept up their training so would be questionable as teachers. Too many professionals ask exorbitant fees that no school could really afford to pay. Unless they have taught along with their professional careers they have lost touch with the beginning training. The true and valuable teacher is one who can take a child and carry them on up to a professional level. We are most interested in having teachers who have made their reputation as teachers rather than as dancers. This will be the reason for going to England and Denmark this summer to seek this kind of teacher.

Early replies from advance correspondence has been encouraging. We have been in contact with VERA VOLKOVA, KIRSTEN RALOV, JOAN LAWSON, RAOUEL GELABERT, MALISSA HAYDEN and BENJAMIN HARKAVAY. All are enthusiastic and willing to come - now all we need is the money. MARY CLARKE has also been most helpful with the plans.

Each year the more advanced students become 'antsy' and over estimate their abilities. One goes to New York and comes back with glorious tales of the wonders of the big city and stirs those in the nest at home. What they do not realize is that in about two months time that glamour wears thin and they see the taudry side of the picture - too late. The nervous breakdowns and disappointments that many suffer could be avoided if they were completely prepared before they left Chicago. Besides being fully equiped technically it is important that they are adult enough to be able to take care of their lives in other ways. When a student is ready we have never been reluctant to let them go - in fact we urge it.

Teachers become like parents in time and the student no longer hears or sees what is being told them; this is where they need to hear another source say the same thing in another way. Which is our reason for hoping to bring in teachers in the future. And the teaching profession in the area certainly needs more intelligent help than they get either in the colleges or the teachers conventions.

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THE PAST.

Those who cannot remember the past
are condemned to repeat it.

- George Santayana.

THE PRESENT.

He who has looked on the things of
the present has seen all things - both
what has been from time eternal and what
shall be during the infinite ages to come.

- Marcus Aurelius.

THE FUTURE.

Nothing has any sense for a man
except insofar as it is directed toward
the future.

- Jose Ortega Y Gasset.

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Quote from John Gielgud's book "Distinguished Company"....on judging an artist.

"It is impossible, of course, to award points to an actor or an actress as one might to a horse, or a dog, a runner or a cricketer - so many marks for technical ability, so many for timing, characterization, emotional power. The subtleties of the actor's craft are almost impossible to dissect in general terms, and any attempts to examine them in detail, except with the experienced pen of a perceptive professional writer, are apt to prove tedious and unsatisfactory to the average reader. Had I not become an actor myself, I should never have wanted to spoil my enjoyment of the theater as a member of the audience by speculating on who should receive the final credit for an outstanding performance - author, actor or director.

In recent years it has sometimes been suggested that rehearsals of a new play should be open to students, members of the audience, and even to the dramatic critics. I believe I speak for most of my colleagues in thinking that such a procedure would be an intolerable intrusion on the privacy of our work. Already we are bound to complete our experiments by a fixed dead line, hoping to be prepared in time, but the first performance we give in public is often greatly inferior, as we ourselves know, to the result we can achieve after playing before an audience for several weeks."

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